

NEWS RELEASE



***OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
San Diego, California***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - June 25, 2007

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt announced that today Jessie Munoz, Mary Lou Vega, Angela Esparza and Edna Davila entered guilty pleas in federal court in San Diego, before United States District Judge Dana M. Sabraw, to participating in a racketeer influenced corrupt organization (RICO) conspiracy involving the Mexican Mafia, aka "La Eme," a prison/street gang. A fifth defendant, Robert Romero, entered his guilty plea to the RICO conspiracy charges on Wednesday, June 20, 2007.

In their guilty pleas, each of the defendants admitted that the Mexican Mafia racketeering organization is involved in a wide range of criminal activities, including: murder; attempted murder; conspiracy to import and distribute controlled substances; conspiracy to interfere with commerce through threats of violence; conspiracy to launder drug proceeds; and robbery. The defendants also acknowledged the manner in which the Mexican Mafia is able to exert control over illegal activities both within the prison system and on the streets of Southern California through its connection to various Hispanic street gangs in San Diego.

In their pleas, the defendants admitted to participating in various racketeering acts which were done in furtherance of the Mexican Mafia criminal enterprise. Jessie Munoz agreed that he participated in fourteen of the racketeering acts alleged in the Indictment, including the murder of Alvaro Hernandez, the distribution of methamphetamine, the “taxation” of drug dealers and the laundering of drug proceeds. Robert Romero, Mary Lou Vega, Angela Esparza and Edna Davila each admitted participating in various drug-related racketeering acts alleged in the Indictment.

The RICO conspiracy charge to which the defendants pled guilty stemmed from a long-term investigation conducted by the multi-agency San Diego Violent Crimes Task Force-Gang Group and North County Regional Gang Task Force, which targeted the criminal activities of Hispanic street gangs with ties to the Mexican Mafia, or “La Eme.”

Sentencing for Robert Romero is set for September 7, 2007. Sentencing for Jessie Munoz, Mary Lou Vega, Angela Esparza, and Edna Davila is set for September 14, 2007, at 9:00 a.m., before United States District Judge Dana M. Sabraw.

DEFENDANTS

Case Number: 06cr1243-DMS

Jessie Munoz
Robert Romero
Edna Davila
Mary Lou Vega
Angela Esparza

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 1962(d) - Conspiracy to Conduct Enterprise Affairs
Through a Pattern of Racketeering Activity

Maximum penalties: life in prison; \$4,000,000 fine; 5 years of supervised release

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES:

Federal Bureau of Investigation
San Diego Sheriff's Office
Immigration and Customs Enforcement
North County Regional Gang Task Force
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Oceanside Police Department
Drug Enforcement Administration - Los Angeles and Riverside
Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement - Los Angeles and Riverside

San Diego Police Department
Escondido Police Department
Carlsbad Police Department
U.S. Bureau of Prisons
Naval Criminal Investigative Service
U.S. Marshals Service
Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms